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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: KIDNAPPING OF UAE DIPLOMAT
IN BAGHDAD

1. Summary: The kidnapping of the UAE diplomat in Baghdad generated extensive coverage in the UAE print and electronic media. Regional media "Al-Arabiya" satellite channel, and the London-based "Al-Sharq Al-Awsat" and "Al-Hayat" dailies also featured the story. Editorials urged the perpetrators to release Al-Nuaimi and reiterated the UAE position to stand beside Iraq to restore its stability and integrity. End summary

2. The kidnapping of UAE diplomat Naji Al-Nuaimi received prominent coverage in the UAE's English and Arabic language dailies. Reports cite a senior UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs source as saying that "the UAEG at the highest level is sparing no efforts to secure the release of its diplomat in Baghdad Naji Al-Nuaimi. Contacts have been established with the Iraqi government and the various political factions to secure the release of Naji and bring him back safe to his family." The source added that "the UAE reiterates its position to maintain the unity and integrity of Iraq and to help to restore the country as a key regional and international player."

3. Main headline in Dubai-based English-language daily "Gulf News" (circulation 95,000): "UAE diplomat's family appeals for his release. GCC officials, Arab League join efforts to secure Naji's freedom."

4. Small, front-page headline in Dubai-based English-language daily "Khaleej Times" (circulation 80,000): "Brother willing to pay ransom for diplomat's safe return." Sources told PA that the family was contacted later by UAEG and asked not to speak to the press.

5. The unsigned editorial in Sharjah-based Arabic daily "Al-Khaleej" (circulation 90,000) 5/18 asks: "What do assassination, kidnapping and sabotage professionals want as a result of their criminal deeds that deserve only damnation? Targeting diplomats who represent their nations to help Iraq, such as the UAE diplomat Naji Al-Nuaimi, is a terrorist act and a crime condemned by all religions, especially at this stage where Iraq is in dire need of any efforts that may help it restore its natural status as a sovereign, free and independent nation. The UAE's role in helping Iraq is as clear as the rays of the sun and should not be responded to with such criminal acts, unless the perpetrators' aim is to keep Iraq drowning in a state of chaos, killing, sabotage and occupation."

6. UAE columnist Nasser Al-Dhaheri wrote in semi-official Abu Dhabi-based Arabic language daily "Al-Ittihad" (circulation 65,000):

"It was customary among the ancient Arabs that when you send your neighbor a basket full of the first harvest of dates, the neighbor always returns the basket full of the fruits of summer harvest. Because Iraq is a nation of abundant products, a land of palm trees and pan-Arab feelings, we hoped to get our basket back with good feelings that would please us. We would be satisfied even if they decide to send it back empty, but not with a head of a dear person or bad news. We have never thought they would assault a UAE diplomat and kill his driver, because they have never distributed bombs, explosives or any means of killing. All of their activities were merely humanitarian as members of a larger team that spared no effort to maintain the unity of Iraq and prevent its division. Because Iraq is living in a political, security and legal vacuum, things are not clear there, thus it is difficult to distinguish between a diplomat who carries coloring materials and medicines and another vicious person who does not hesitate to go to a mosque for a suicide bombing."

7. Under the headline "Kidnappers will not deter UAE", "Gulf News" 5/18 editorialized:

"Iraq will not be abandoned. The UAE will stand by its

commitment towards the rebuilding of the war-torn country and the preservation of its unity. The incident is not the first terrorist attempt against the UAE's diplomatic mission in Iraq. Twice before, mission cars have been shot at and two Iraqi employees were killed a few weeks ago. The perpetrators, it is believed, are trying to drive the UAE diplomats out of the troubled country. Other countries whose diplomats had come under attack earlier have made an exit. However, the UAE has always stood firm in the face of terrorism. Its solidarity with the Iraqi people is not negotiable. The kidnappers should release the diplomat immediately. Their identity is not yet known, but they are without doubt the enemies of Iraq because the UAE presence in that country is aimed to help its unfortunate people. The UAE Red Crescent is one of the most active organizations there. The Iraqi government should launch a hunt for the kidnappers of Al-Nauaimi and bring them to justice."

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